

# FORT LANCASTER

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

*Sheffield, Texas*

## Post-Visit Guide

## Grade 7

### Overview: Fort Lancaster: Beyond the Civil War

In this lesson, students will learn about how the changing footprint of Fort Lancaster relates to a timeline of its milestones, military highlights, occupation, and abandonment.

### Social Studies TEKS

((5) History. The student understands how events and issues shaped the history of Texas during the Civil War and Reconstruction. The student is expected to:

(B) analyze the political, economic, and social effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Texas.

(6) History. The student understands how individuals, events, and issues shaped the history of Texas from Reconstruction through the beginning of the 20th century. The student is expected to:

(A) identify significant individuals, events, and issues from Reconstruction through the beginning of the 20th century, including the factors leading to the expansion of the Texas frontier, the effects of westward expansion on American Indians, the buffalo soldiers, and Quanah Parker.

(8) Geography. The student uses geographic tools to collect, analyze, and interpret data. The student is expected to:

(A) create and interpret thematic maps, graphs, charts, models, and databases representing various aspects of Texas during the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.

(21) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas;

(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions;

(C) organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps;

(H) use appropriate mathematical skills to interpret social studies information such as maps and graphs.

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## Materials

- Historical images for display/distribution
- Activity resources

## Activity: Fort Lancaster Visit

*10 minutes*

Ask students to reflect on their visit to Fort Lancaster by completing all columns of their **KWL chart**. Have students share their experiences including any new questions raised by the visit.

## Activity: Fort Lancaster 1856 and 1860

*25 minutes*

Context: The building of Fort Lancaster took years of construction and maintenance by the troops in residence. In his reports, General Mansfield described a more permanent and well-built Fort Lancaster in November 1860, but in three short months, the fort would be vacated and left to Texas and the Confederacy. Because of the start of the Civil War, all U.S. troops were ordered away from west Texas forts on February 18, 1861.

Display/distribute the **1856 and 1860 Fort Lancaster reports** written by General Joseph Mansfield, the **1856 and 1860 maps** of the fort, and the **activity worksheet**. Have students work individually or in pairs to complete the activity. Share responses.

### Answer Key:

1. Supplies kept in a stone building with canvas roof; hackale carpenter shop; turnley style barracks and officers' cottages
2. Turnley buildings were damaged in transport and too delicate.
3. They had been replaced by adobe buildings with wooden floors. Half were shingled and half had thatched roofs.
4. The sutler building, next to the corral in 1856, had been moved north of the Road to San Antonio by 1860. The hospital, which had been south of the parade and officers' quarters in 1856, had been moved north of the road by 1860.
5. Some were shingled and some had thatched roofs.

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## Activity: Fort Lancaster Through Time

*10 minutes*

Display/distribute the **Fort Lancaster Timeline**. As a class, discuss the following questions:

- When was the first time the administration of Fort Lancaster changed hands? **1861, from U.S. to Texas**
- How many more times did the administration change and in what years? **1863 Texas to Confederacy, 1866 Confederacy to U.S. again, 1870s abandoned to local citizens**
- Why was Fort Lancaster evacuated in 1861? **Texas seceded and demanded U.S. Army surrender all property**
- Why was the fort reoccupied by U.S. regular soldiers? In what year? **rise in Native American attacks, 1867**
- What Army unit was stationed at Fort Lancaster until 1879? **Buffalo Soldiers of the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry**
- In what year was the only known Native American attack at a U.S. fort carried out? **1867**
- Why was Fort Lancaster eventually abandoned? **to reduce threats from Apaches and Comanches**

## Extension Activity: The Changing Face of Fort Lancaster

*30 minutes*

The members of the U.S. Army assigned to Camp Lancaster built most of their new post from materials they found nearby, including quarried limestone, mud for adobe bricks, and grass for thatched roofs. Divide the class into groups. Using the descriptions below and the historic reports and maps included in the Compare and Contrast Primary Source activity, have one group create a diorama of Camp/Fort Lancaster buildings in 1856 and the other group create a diorama of Fort Lancaster buildings in 1860. As a class, compare and contrast the two forts in three dimensions, and discuss how Fort Lancaster changed over time. Relate these examples of historic Fort Lancaster to the ruins of Fort Lancaster today.

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## Historic Buildings

- **Picket Buildings**

The earliest structures were picket buildings (*jacals* or “hackales” as Mansfield called them). They were built from upright poles sunk in the ground. A mixture of mud and wood chips filled the spaces between the poles, and a canvas or thatched roof completed the structure. The first bakery, carpenter shop, and hospital at Camp Lancaster were all housed in this type of building.

*Suggested diorama supplies: toothpicks, modeling clay, canvas, straw*



- **Turnley Portable Cottages**

The Army experimented with prefabricated buildings, like Turnley portable cottages, until more permanent structures were built. The entire building could be put together by three men in just four hours. Turnley buildings weren't very strong, though, and the Assistant Surgeon George Taylor noted in 1856 that they could “scarcely resist the violence of the strong winds which frequently arise.”

*Suggested diorama supplies: Toothpicks, popsicle sticks, paper*



- **Adobe and Limestone Buildings**

After Camp Lancaster was upgraded to Fort Lancaster in 1856, the Army built more permanent stone and adobe structures. The buildings' corners and chimneys were built from quarried limestone for stability, and the walls were usually adobe bricks—all held together with lime and sand mortar. Wooden floors, plastered walls, and thatched or wood shingled roofs finished the buildings.

*Suggested diorama supplies: building blocks, marshmallows, craft or decoupage glue, popsicle sticks, clay, craft shingles, straw*



## Assessment

Evaluate students' KWL charts and activity resource worksheets for completeness and understanding.

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## Activity Image: General Joseph Mansfield Fort Lancaster Report, 1856

**hackale:** A hackale (jacal) is a picket building with walls of close-set poles tied together and filled with mud, clay, and/or grasses. Roofs were thatched or covered with canvas.

### Inspector General Joseph Mansfield's Inspection

#### Report of Fort Lancaster

June, 1856

Quartermaster's duty has been performed by 2nd Lt G. A. Williams since 20th August 1855, and well managed. He has as extra duty men, 1 quartermaster Sergeant, 3 teamsters, 1 herder, 1 carpenter, 3 wagons, 1 cart, 26 mules. The supplies are good & kept in a building of stone walls & canvas roof. Carpenters shop a hackale. - A good corral. - His accounts & returns all correctly kept. There was due the U. S. on the 30th May 405 86/100 dolls & expended since 20 60/100 dolls leaving a balance on his hands at date in an iron safe of 385 26/100 dolls. The supplies come from San Antonio via Fort Clark. He has on hand 3 barracks and 3 officers' cottages of the Turnley pattern. They had been damaged in transportation & are too delicate.

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Activity Image: General Joseph Mansfield Fort Lancaster Report, 1860

## Inspector General Joseph Mansfield's Inspection

### Report of Fort Lancaster

November, 1860

Fort Lancaster has been established several years. It is on the road to El Paso, on Live Oak Creek, near its junction with the Pecos, & four miles from the crossing of that river. It is 97 miles from Fort Hudson, and 87 miles from Fort Stockton. It was inspected by me in 1856. There were then two companies here, & the quarters, and accommodations quite inferior. The soldiers then occupied the Turnley Cottages for quarters. Since that time they have proved a failure as I then anticipated, and their place has been filled by good adobe buildings, with wooden floors, & about half of them shingled the remainder with thatched roofs (see plans of the fort herewith), and all the command are comfortably lodged.

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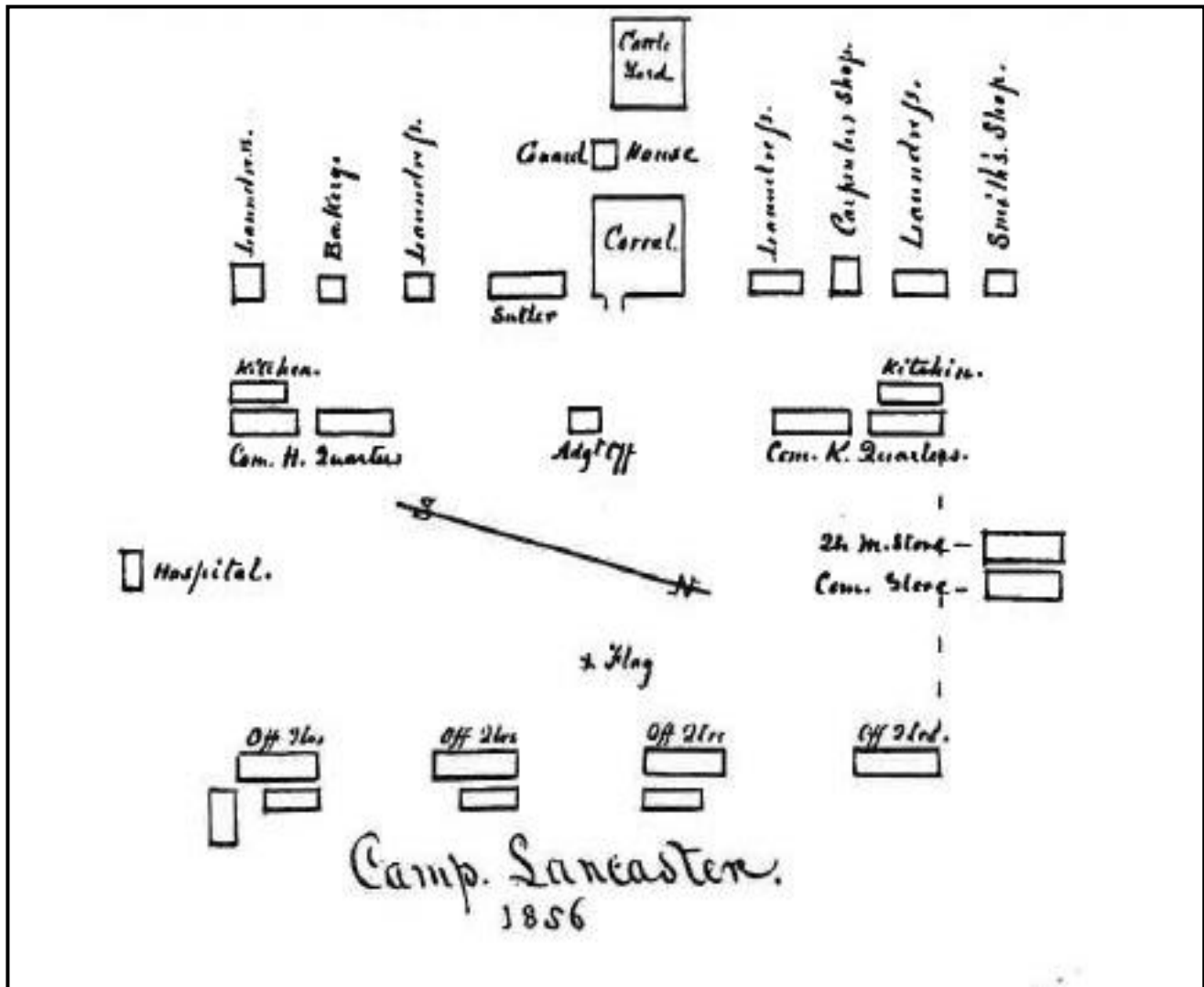
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## Fort Lancaster Map, 1856



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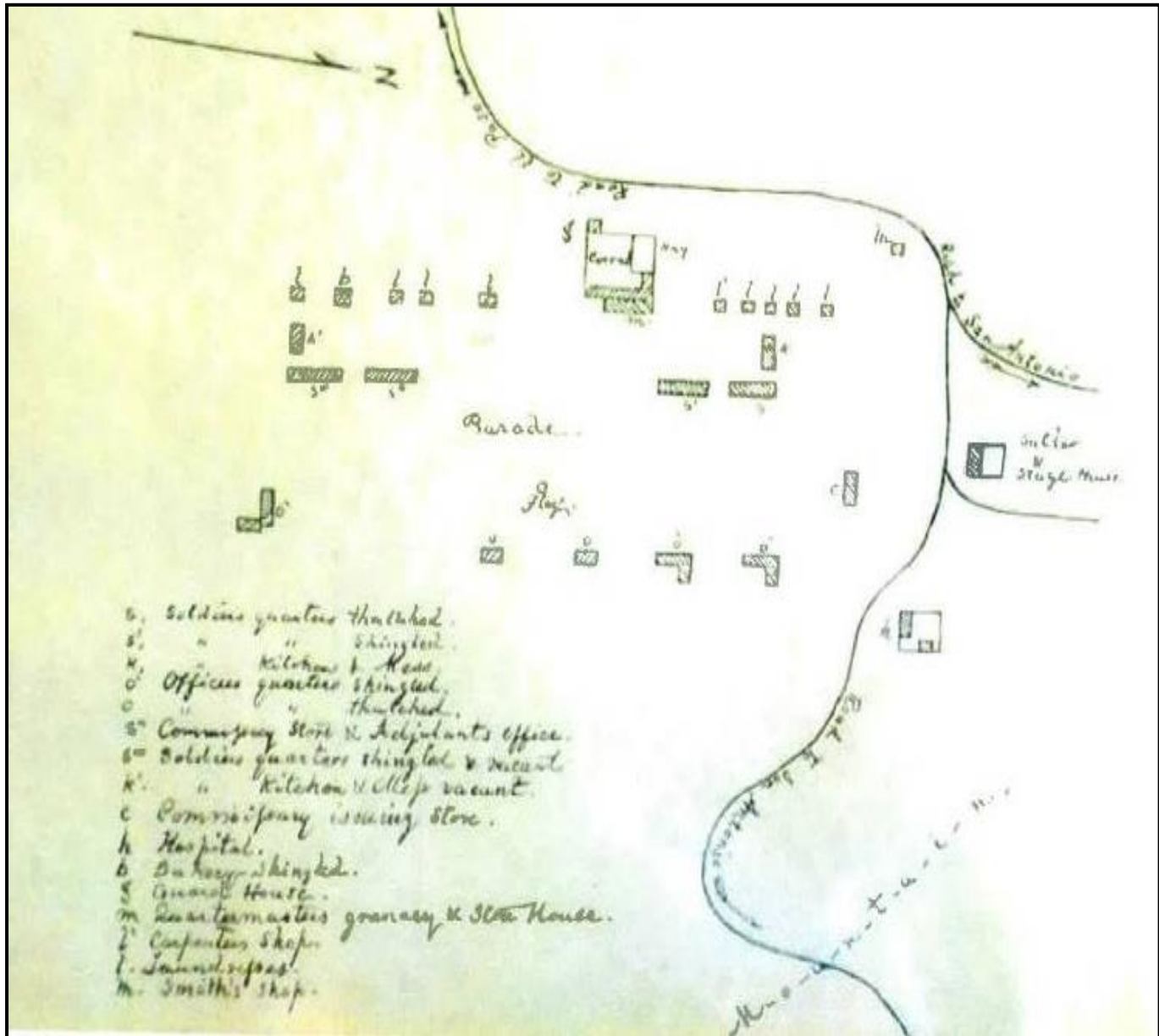
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## Fort Lancaster Map, 1860



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## Fort Lancaster 1856 and 1869

Use General Mansfield's reports and the fort maps to answer these questions.

1. Describe three different structures mentioned in the 1856 report.
2. In 1856, what type of building were the barracks and officer cottages? What was wrong with these structures?
3. According to the 1860 report, how had the accommodations of companies H and K changed?
4. Compare the two fort maps. Describe the changes to the sutler and hospital buildings.
5. According to the 1860 map, there were two different types of officer's quarters listed in the legend. How were the structures different?

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## Fort Lancaster Timeline



1855

- **Camp Lancaster Established**

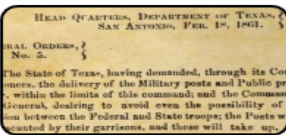
- The U.S. Army established Camp Lancaster, a small post on the Lower Road near Live Oak Creek and the Pecos River.



1856

- **Lancaster Upgraded to a Fort**

- The U.S. Army officially upgraded Camp Lancaster to Fort Lancaster on August 21, making it more permanent and prompting construction of sturdier buildings.



1861

- **U.S. Soldiers Evacuate Fort Lancaster**

- Having voted to secede from the United States, Texas demanded that the U.S. Army surrender all of its property, including the forts. On February 18, 1861, Gen. Twiggs ordered all U.S. soldiers to evacuate Texas.



1861-1862

- **State of Texas Takes Lancaster**

- Texas seized control of all frontier forts and supplies, but the Texas militia never occupied the fort for very long.



1862

- **Confederates Take Charge, Then Leave Lancaster**

- As patrolling its frontier was too expensive, Texas convinced the Confederacy to take over border defense. Soon after, the Confederate Army reassigned nearly half of the Frontier Regiment to defend the Texas coast. As a result, abandoned Fort Lancaster was burned by Apaches and Comanches.



1866-1867

- **U.S. Army Reestablishes Control of the Forts**

- After a rise in Native American attacks in the west, the U.S. Army once again patrolled the western frontier from the forts. U.S. Regulars reoccupied Fort Lancaster in 1867.



1867-1879

- **Lancaster as a Sub-Post**

- The U.S. Army used Fort Lancaster as a sub-post of Fort Stockton, located 75 miles west, or Fort McKavett, located 110 miles east. Buffalo soldiers of the 9th cavalry were stationed at Fort Lancaster.



1867

- **Battle at Fort Lancaster**

- The Buffalo Soldiers stationed at Fort Lancaster fended off hundreds of Kickapoo, Mexican, and white attackers. Three soldiers died in the Battle of Fort Lancaster, which is the only known attack on a U.S. Army fort in Texas by Native Americans.



Late 1870s

- **Fort Lancaster Abandoned**

- The U.S. Army abandoned the fort due to reduced threat from Apaches and Comanches. With lack of use, Fort Lancaster quickly fell into disrepair, crumbling from exposure and neglect. Eventually, locals began carrying off the buildings' limestone blocks to construct their own homes and businesses nearby.



1968

- **Fort Lancaster Revived**

- After almost a century of neglect, the State of Texas began managing the site, preserving the ruins, and educating visitors through programs and annual events.